

REMARKS

This Reply and Amendment is intended to be completely responsive to the final Office Action. Claims 1-70 are pending in this Application and Claims 1-42 and 44-65 currently stand rejected. Upon entry of this amendment, independent Claims 1 and 20 will be canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits, in order to expedite issuance of allowable subject matter. Independent Claim 40 will be amended to recite subject matter from dependent Claim 43 that the Examiner indicated to be allowable. All remaining dependent claims have either been amended to depend from an allowed/allowable independent claim, or have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits.

The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present Application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Allowed/Allowable Subject Matter

In Section 6 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner stated that "Claim 43 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicants have amended independent Claim 40 to recite the subject matter of dependent Claim 43 as suggested by the Examiner, and canceled dependent Claim 43 without prejudice. Dependent Claims 41, 42 and 44-65 depend from independent Claim 40 as amended.

Accordingly, the Applications respectfully request entry of the amendment and allowance of Claims 40-42 and 44-65.

In Section 7 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner stated that "Claims 66-68 and 70 are allowed." The Applicants thank the Examiner for allowance of the claims, and have amended dependent Claim 69 to depend from independent Claim 66 to address the antecedent basis rejection identified by the Examiner. The Applicants have amended dependent Claims 4-7, 10-12, 14-19, 36 and 38 to depend from allowed independent Claim 66.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that upon entry of the amendment, all the pending claims 4-7, 10-12, 14-19, 36, 38, 40-42, and 44-70 will be in condition for allowance.

The Applications respectfully request entry of the amendment and allowance of Claims 4-7, 10-12, 14-19, 36, 38, 40-42, and 44-70.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2

The Applicants have amended dependent Claim 69 to depend from independent Claim 66 to address the antecedent basis rejection identified by the Examiner. The Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Independent Claims 1 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits, in order to expedite issuance of allowable subject matter. Their corresponding dependent Claims have all been canceled without prejudice or amended to depend from allowed independent Claim 66.

The Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the pending claims.

* * *

The Applicants believe that each outstanding rejection to the pending claims has been overcome, and the Application is in condition for allowance. Upon entry of this amendment, independent Claims 1 and 20 will be canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits, in order to expedite issuance of allowable subject matter. Independent Claim 40 will be amended to recite subject matter from dependent Claim 43 that the Examiner indicated to be allowable. All remaining dependent claims have either been amended to depend from an allowed/allowable independent claim, or have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. The Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment and reconsideration and allowance of pending Claims 4-7, 10-12, 14-19, 36, 38, 40-42, and 44-70.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes that a telephone interview or Examiner's amendment would advance the prosecution of the Application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, the Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorize payment of any such extension fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 9/14/2006

By 

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